

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting
August 9-10, 2004

Reno, Nevada

Board members present: Robin Lohnes, Dr. Jay Merriam, Dr. Wayne Burkhardt, Larry Johnson, Dr. Vernon Dooley, Renee Taylor, Bill Higham, and Gary Zakotnik. Board member not present: Hilleary Bogley. Washington Office and BLM staff: Tom Dyer, Jeff Rawson, Don Glenn, Sally Spencer, Sharon Kipping, EK James, Dean Bolstad, Bea Wade, Janet Neal, Ramona DeLorme. NV State Office: Amy Leuders, Associate State Director, Suzie Stokke, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, Gene Seidlitz, Assistant DSD, Resources, Lands and Planning/NLCS, Maxine Shane, Public Affairs, Nancy Taylor, Alan Shepherd, Wyoming Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, Tom Pogacnik, California Wild Horse and Burro Specialist. USDA, Forest Service representative: Toni Strauss.

Amy Leuders, Associated State Director of Nevada, welcomed the Board to Reno, Nevada. She thanked the Board for their help in getting monies reprogrammed for the Wild Horse and Burro Program, it made a significant impact on the gathers. She informed the Board that Governor Kenny Guinn has identified the week of August 16-21, 2004, as "Wild Horse and Burro Week" for the State of Nevada. She introduced Gene Seidlitz, Assistant DSD, Resources, Lands and Planning/NLCS, for the Nevada State Office. He reviewed the current status of the Nevada Wild Horse and Burro program.

May 2004 Minutes

The minutes were approved by the Board with no corrections.

Charter and 2005 Nominations Update

Sharon Kipping reviewed the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Charter along with the 2005 Advisory Board nominations.

FY04-05 Funding

Jeff Rawson and Don Glenn went over the Fiscal Year 04 and 05 Funding. The BLM requested \$10.5M reprogramming dollars and received only \$7.66M, which was allocated quickly to the States allowing them to continue gathers, adoptions, preparation and holding. A discussion ensued about how the money was allocated among the states and the different parts of the program. These allocations were made in consensus with the Steering Committee and state program leads.

Fiscal Year 2005 budget justification identified a need of \$12.8M for the Bureau to reach targeted AML by 2006/2007. The House has recommended \$10.5M. Senate action is pending.

Update on Pending Litigation

There is no pending litigation.

Gathers Update

Dean Bolstad updated the Board on the gather schedule. HMAs where fertility control has been or is planned to be applied has been noted by an asterisk.

Facility Report

Bea Wade discussed the current update of the facilities and current contracts. As of July 26, 2004, there are 5,745 horses in the short-term holding and 13,491 in the long-term holding facilities. There are three new long-term holding facilities which will begin to receive horses approximately October 1, 2004. They are Hulah, in Bartlesville, OK, and Grenola, Grenola, KS. They both have a capacity of 2,200 horses. Also, the Pawhuska, Drummond Land & Cattle, is an existing facility that maintains 2,000 mares and foals. It will now have a full capacity, with both contracts, to maintain 4,200 mares/foals. During the presentation, there was a discussion about the need to balance the ages of those horses to be presented for adoption.

National Adoption Plan

Sally Spencer updated the Board on the National Adoption Plan. The Plan is being finalized by the Implementation Plan Core Group. The Plan will next be sent to the State Leads for comment and then be implemented as BLM policy. Carol Alm, Executive Director, National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation, discussed the role the Foundation plays in the adoption process. The Foundation will work with a marketing consultant to reposition the image of the wild horse and promote the program to the horse affinity market. The Board whole-heartedly supported the effort of the National Adoption Plan and the fact that the BLM is rapidly moving in this area.

Compliance Handbook

Sharon presented the Compliance Handbook which was recently approved and the printing is in progress. The Board suggests the BLM ensure that the national adoption packets are consistent with the Compliance Handbook.

Pilot Project for Reduced Adoption Fee

Dean Bolstad discussed the pilot project for the reduced adoption fee. The purpose of the program is to determine if reduced fees are effective incentives to increase the numbers of animals adopted in a shorter timeframe, especially those that are four years of age and older. Information is also needed to determine if any compliance issues are associated with reduced fee adoptions. There was a discussion on the optional provisions with this effort, which included the following options:

- Have all four year old and older horses and jacks presented at satellite adoption events offered at a starting bid and adoption fee of \$25.00.
- Have four year old and older horses and jacks available for adoption at short-term holding facilities be offered at the reduced fee of \$25.00. This would be discretionary.
- The Buddy system could still be utilized, but only after two rounds of bidding at a satellite event have been completed and making the buddy animals only available to adopters that have adopted wild horses or burros at the base fee of \$125.00.
- Not offering any trained horses or jenny burros at a reduced fee.
- All horses that have been to two satellite adoption events may be available at the next event for the reduced fee of \$25.00
- Have 10% to 25% of the horses offered at each adoption event be in the four year and older age class.
- Have all states complete a report of how each event was conducted. NPO could develop a tracking system to assess the success of this pilot program, and to document the number of animals adopted as frequent flyers, buddies, reduced fee jacks, or four years and older horses.
- Have mandatory compliance checks done on all reduced fee animals.

The Bureau stated the need to maintain flexibility so that local officials could apply judgment to specific situations.

Forest Service Update

Toni Strauss gave a presentation on the Forest Service program. The Forest Service continues to work toward a more effective program.

Census Research Update

Jason Ransom, USGS-BRD, Census Research Lead, gave a presentation on census techniques. Report covered all the basic census techniques including the use of a combination of techniques. The Board will be provided an update of this in November 2004.

Fertility Control Research Update

Dean Bolstad provided a fertility control update. The update included the status of the development of the 3 to 4 year PZP agent and a summary of four years of monitoring data from the Clan Alpine HMA study. Also, he reported the number of animals by HMA involved in existing and planned individual and population based trials through the end of Fiscal Year 2004. The Bureau will provide an update at the next meeting.

APHIS Agreement

Don Glenn discussed the APHIS Agreement in detail and a copy of the final agreement will be made available to the Board at the November meeting.

WY Pilot Project

Alan Shepherd, WY Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, presented an overview of the WY Pilot Project. This project was initiated by the Wyoming State Grazing Board. Along with the WY State Grazing Board, the Wyoming State Department of Agriculture and BLM are partners in this project under an umbrella Memorandum of Understanding. The objective is to help the BLM with wild horse management in the State of Wyoming, particularly in the placement of older, hard to adopt horses. A variety of states have contacted the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and indicated interest in this program.

Other

Bob Abbey, Nevada State Director, appeared briefly in the afternoon and expressed Nevada's appreciation to the Board.

Public Comment

Public comment began at 4:00 p.m., on Monday, August 9, 2004, with three individuals speaking.

Tuesday, August 10, 2004

California Volunteer Project

Tom Pogacnik and Janet Neal presented the California Volunteer Project. This is a joint effort of the California State Office, National BLM Office, and the National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation to expand the volunteer program and improve the management of the program. It is expected that the effort will be exportable to other states. The project will not require any additional permanent positions. An updated report will be given to the Board at the next meeting.

Other

Wayne Burkhardt led the Board in a discussion about the possibilities of using public lands for long-term holding of non-reproductive, unadoptable horses.

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Recommendation

Reno, Nevada

August 9-10, 2004

1. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends that the BLM look into the possibility of using public lands for long-term holding of unadoptable geldings, including utilizing vacant allotments, exploring legal issues, costs and availability.

Follow Up Items

1. The Board thanks The Foundation for all its efforts and fully supports the Foundation's review of the adoption process for possibilities of outsourcing parts of the adoption process.
2. The Board suggests that information in the National Adoption packets be consistent with the information in the Compliance Handbook.
3. The BLM will provide the Board an update of the Census Research effort at the November 8-9, 2004 meeting.
4. The BLM will provide the Board a copy of the BLM/APHIS Agreement at the November 8-9, 2004 meeting.
5. BLM will provide the Board an update of the California Volunteer Pilot Project at the November 8-9, 2004 meeting.

Agenda Discussion for Next Meeting

The Board discussed the following agenda items for its next meeting:

FY05 Funding

Update Fertility Control Efforts

Update Census Research

Update CA Volunteer Pilot Project

Eastern States Office Evaluation

In FY 2005, suggested that the Advisory Board meet three times per year, instead of four; and one day, instead of one and one-half days.

Next Meeting/Date/Site

The next Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for November 8-9, 2004, in Reno, Nevada with a possible field trip to a horse gather or to the Palomino Valley Center. The gather site or field trip site will be determined at a later date.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m., on Tuesday, August 10, 2004.